

## Living in Bear Country

**Most bear complaints** happen in late summer when bears are traveling in search of food to fatten up for the winter.

Here are some tips for city-folks and rural homeowners to avoid most conflicts with bears:

- Keep garbage in bear-proof, latchable containers, or inside a closed building until the morning the garbage will be picked up.
- Empty and remove bird feeders during the summer months. Bears find that bird feeders are an easy food source.
- Clean up fruit that has fallen from fruit trees in your yard. Rotting fruit attracts bears as well as raccoons and skunks.
- Feed pets inside or during daylight hours; do not leave pet food or food scraps outside of your home. Table scraps and pet foods attract bears.
- Store horse and livestock grains inside closed barns.
- Don't compost in bear country. Decomposing organic materials will attract bears.
- Keep barbecue grills stored inside closed buildings.
- If you see a bear, notify police, Fish and Game or other authorities; watch it from a distance, and leave it alone. Black bears are not usually aggressive, but the danger may increase if a bear loses its fear of humans.

**Improperly stored food** in campgrounds or backcountry camps become all too tempting for the hungry bruins. Bears are part of the landscape like mosquitoes and wildflowers, and a few simple precautions can make camping areas safe and enjoyable for bears and campers alike.

Tips for around camp:

- Keep a clean camp. Pick up garbage and store it in a closed vehicle or in a plastic bag tied high in a tree. Store all food in a bear-resistant container, camper or vehicle. Never keep food in your tent.
- Do not bury food scraps, pour out cooking grease, or leave anything that might be tasty on the ground or in the fire pit. Also, store barbecue grills or other smelly cooking gear inside your vehicle or within a sealed container. Bears have a tremendous sense of smell and they will come looking for an easy meal.
- If you see a bear, watch it from a distance and leave it alone. Black bears are not usually aggressive, but the danger may increase if a bear loses its fear of humans.